

**HON. MARCY KAPTUR
Â OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to identify with the remarks of the gentleman from Kansas and say that this is likely to be the first year in America when we will import more food than we export. It is another sign of what is happening to the innards of this economy. Agriculture has always helped America maintain her independence. We best keep that in front of us as we move forward.

I wanted to come to the floor tonight to talk about and pay tribute to something on the manufacturing side of our economy, a company that has been noted for excellence as a top-of-the-line firm. I talked about it a little bit earlier during the Special Order dealing with the economy; but Maytag Corporation, headquartered in Newton, Iowa, sadly, will be closing. I own no stock in this company. I have no personal worth associated with it, but I am one of the millions of American homeowners and householders who says ``thank you" to those who helped build and maintain this great American company. Thank you for the excellence of your products.

The company was founded in 1893 by F.L. Maytag, 35 miles east of Des Moines, Iowa, in Newton, Iowa. Soon it, along with sister plants in Arkansas and Illinois, will be closing, idling 3,000 more people losing their jobs in manufacturing in those places. Hopefully, some of them will be able to find other jobs.

But the point I want to talk about tonight is you just don't replace a Maytag company. The generations of Americans who crafted, built, and serviced this all-American product deserve recognition in this Congress. They should be proud of the heritage of which they are a part and of their commitment to quality. Maytag Corporation when it shuts its doors will be closing a chapter in American history that for generations stood for quality and high performance. It was America's industry leader. Maytag helped define America's manufacturing heartland. In fact,

Maytag itself symbolized the words ``quality" and ``dependability."

Some people will say, well, a washing machine is a washing machine. A dryer is a dryer. What does it matter? Yes, there are other companies, Mr. Speaker. There are other companies. But they don't match Maytag's sterling reputation for product quality. How often have we seen in the age in which we are living the dumbing down of American manufacturing and its displacement by lesser quality products made with lesser quality parts, many of which are imported from foreign countries?

We have witnessed the demise of the U.S. television industry, the furniture industry, the automotive industry, the loss of our energy independence, and now probably this year the loss of our agricultural independence.

It is correct. The average age of farmers in this country is now 59 years old. What about America's agricultural future? But in this industry of home appliances, an industry leader is brought to its knees as excellence again gives way to global market pressures.

As I have studied Maytag's componentry compared to competing products, I am struck by how much America is really losing. It is losing more than a company. It is losing a standard of excellence.

Mr. Speaker, Maytag's quality was more than marketing. Maytag was real. It really was excellent. Its corporate success began with fine design, careful craftsmanship, investment in research and development, and employment of excellent raw materials. Maytag's employees were proud citizens, living in a proud Republic. They knew they were helping to build a strong America, and they did that every day for over a hundred years.

For Maytag, quality was achieved on several levels. Most Americans know Maytag through its commercials which show the lonely Maytag repairman who never got a call for servicing because America's homemakers simply didn't have problems, or rarely did, with Maytag machines. Quality was number one. Maytag's performance was assured by a long history of investments in research and design that assured that quality. Only recently when they became a victim of the downsizing that is hitting U.S. manufacturing did the firm begin to cut back on research and development. The trickle down effect of foreign competition and the cheapening

of componentry affected Maytag.

The list of Maytag's engineering bests compared to competitors has been documented and is extensive. This is what we are losing, to name a few: heavy duty stabilizing springs that assured best performance. That sounds like a simple thing to make, but it isn't. Heavy duty base leveling legs; gauge quality in the metals; high torque motor; counterbalancing tubs. And the type of transmission that had only three parts, not 30, and, therefore, repairs were kept to a minimum.

Mr. Speaker, as I end this evening, Maytag earned our trust: "The value you demand from the brand you trust." America can't afford to lose a company like Maytag.